

Stress and Law Enforcement



What is Stress?

- Stress is your body's physical and psychological response to anything you perceive as overwhelming.
- It is an elevation of a person's state of arousal or readiness caused by stimulus or demand.
- What makes you stressed out?

Signs and Symptoms of Stress

The following are some common stress reactions:

- Physical Signs
- Emotional/Psychological Signs
- Behavioral Signs
- Thinking
- Social

Physical Signs

Fatigue

Vomiting

Nausea

Chest Pain

Twitches

Dizziness

Black Outs

Gastrointestinal Problems
Disorders

Muscle Tremors

Grinding of Teeth

Profuse Sweating

Rapid Heart Rate

Difficulty Breathing

Diarrhea

Headaches

Immune System

Emotional Signs

- Anxiety
- Guilt
- Fear
- Denial
- Irritability
- Panic
- Depression
- Anger
- Bad Thoughts



Behavioral Signs

- Withdrawal
- Pacing
- Suspicion
- Emotional Outbursts
- Inability to Rest
- Anti-Social Acts
- Change in Activity
- Substance Abuse



Thinking Problems

- Memory Problems
- Disorientation and confusion
- Slow thought process; cannot concentrate
- Difficulty setting priorities
- Loss of objectivity



Social Reactions

- Isolation
- Blaming
- Difficulty in giving or accepting support
- Inability to experience pleasure or have fun



According to the FBI, the “Top 10 most Stressful Law Enforcement Critical Life Events” are:

1. The violent death of a partner in the line of duty.
2. The dismissal or loss of job.
3. Taking a life in the line of duty.
4. Shooting someone in the line of duty.
5. Suicide of an officer who is a close friend.
6. The violent death of another officer in the line of duty.
7. A murder committed by a law enforcement officer.
8. A duty related violent injury such as a shooting.
9. A violent job related injury to another officer.
10. A suspension from a job.

Sources of Stress

- Pressure of Law Enforcement work
- Attitude of the general public towards police officers
- Operation of Criminal Justice System
- Issues in Officer's personal life
- Law Enforcement organization itself

How can I reduce stress?

- Accept that there are things that you cannot control.
- Be assertive, instead of aggressive.
- Learn to relax.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat well-balanced meals.
- Rest, and Sleep.
- Do not rely on alcohol or drugs to reduce stress.
- And most importantly.....

Keep a
positive
attitude!!



Just the Facts

- 706,886 sworn law enforcement officers in the United States. (88% males and 12% females.) (FBI Website)
- Average yearly line-of-duty deaths involving LEO was 126 in 2012. (Nat'l Law Enforcement Memorial Fund, 2012).
- Law Enforcement Officers average 60,000 assaults and 20,000 injuries every year.
- It is estimated that approximately 300 law enforcement officers take their life every year.
- Law enforcement officers are killed at a rate of two times greater by their own hands, than in the line of duty.

- Law enforcement officers take their life at a rate of two-three times more than the general population.
- Approximately 95% of Law Enforcement suicides involve the use of a firearm as compared to the general population of 58%.
- 65% of those suicides involved officers with documented alcohol abuse issues.
- For every officer that is killed in the line of duty, three more will commit suicide.

Top three professions for suicide

- ?
- ?
- ?

- What do they all have in common?

Suicide is a permanent
solution to a temporary
problem!

Other Facts

- Not only does Law Enforcement have one of the highest suicide rates, but they also have the second highest divorce rates in the nation.
- Law Enforcement Officers are twice as likely to have a drinking problem as the general population.
- Researchers use three key indexes to determine how stressful a profession is, alcoholism, divorce rate, and suicide rate. Does not look good for police work does it?
- Studies that were performed in New York showed that almost all officers that committed suicide were intoxicated at the time of their death.
- The single most important factor in police suicide is marital discord.

Job Burnout

Burnout is a state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long-term exposure to demanding work situations. You may be more prone to “burnout” if

:

- You identify strongly with work and lack a balance between work and personal life.
- You try to be everything to everybody.
- Your job is monotonous.
- You work in a “helping” profession such as nursing, teaching, police work, etc.

Some Signs and Symptoms of Burnout

- Are you becoming more cynical or critical at work?
- Have you lost the ability to experience joy?
- Do you drag yourself into work and have a hard time getting started?
- Are you less patient with co-workers?
- Do you have a hard time laughing at yourself?
- Are you tired of co-workers asking if you are okay?
- Have your sleep habits or appetite changed?
- Are you troubled with headaches, neck or lower back pain?

The Six R's for Stress Management

Responsibility

- You are in control
- Establish priorities
- Keep it simple

Reflection

- Know your stress triggers
- Be aware of stress symptoms
- Check your balance in life.

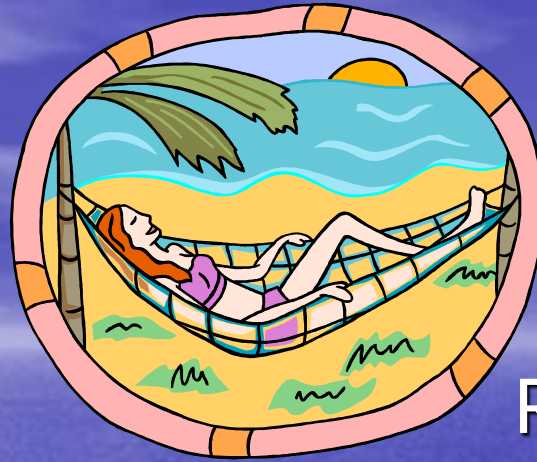


Relaxation

- Do something good for yourself
- Schedule "worry" time
- Schedule time out

Relationships

- Maintain supportive relationships
- Manage your relationships
- Improve your relationship



Refueling

- Eat a well balanced diet with high fiber, low cholesterol
- Be aware of poisons such as caffeine, fats, and fast food
- Drink lots of water

Recreation

- Laugh and love
- Learn how to have fun with your family
- Enjoy your life and treat others the way you want to be treated